

## THE MODERN GREECE 1859 - 1977

On June 27, 1862, the British-owned steamer MODERN GREECE ran aground off the North Carolina coast near Fort Fisher while attempting to run the Federal blockade. The vessel was loaded with munitions, hardware, and other materials bound for the Confederate States. Although the crew was able to salvage some of the cargo, the ship was blown up with much of its cargo still aboard. The wreck was well known for many years, but became accessible to divers only in 1962 when a severe storm removed much of the sand which had covered the vessel. The MODERN GREECE sank during the heyday of blockade running and now lies in an area littered with other wrecks of ships lost in trying to run the blockade at Wilmington. The cargo of the MODERN GREECE is a good example of the type of goods that were brought through the blockade during this period. For this reason the ship, the cargo, the sinking, and efforts at salvage bear consideration.

### BLOCKADE RUNNING AND WILMINGTON

Thirteen days after the evacuation of Fort Sumter, President Lincoln proclaimed a total blockade of the coastline from Cape Henry to the Mexican border, a distance of over 4,000 miles. At first this blockade was sneered upon by the Confederates who recognized the difficulties involved in enforcing a blockade of this magnitude. The Confederate government was slow to react to Lincoln's proclamation. They made no provision for government supply of their armies, for they assumed falsely that the secession would be peaceful. This lack of governmental concern led to the rise of the lucrative private business of blockade running. Enormous profits could be made on both the inward and outward journeys until the end of 1864 when the effect of the blockade became more severe.

Manufactured goods were brought in at exorbitant prices; and cotton, desperately needed by English mills, was shipped out at equally inflated prices. The sale of the inbound cargo itself often brought 500 to 1,000 percent of its original cost. These enormous profits made